

NCDOT Rail Division

The Rail Report



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Completed Projects Increase Capacity and Efficiency on Intermodal Corridor



New Stout siding extension

Stouts Siding Extension

Construction of two major projects are complete on the CSX intermodal corridor between the Port of Wilmington and Charlotte, providing important freight capacity improvements on the route served by the Queen City Express and other freight services. The new siding at Indian Trail (Stouts) and improvements in East Laurinburg, Bladenboro and East Arcadia help to keep rail freight traffic moving on this strategic freight corridor while improvements to Bladenboro and East Arcadia sidings provide additional capacity and operational improvements.

“CSX is proud to partner with the NCDOT on these freight rail improvement projects which will enhance capacity and efficiency along the Wilmington-Charlotte corridor. The State’s focus aligns with our company’s priority to provide safe and reliable service for our customers and the Port of Wilmington,” said John Dillard, Director—State Government Affairs, CSX Transportation.

Stouts Siding was one of the first projects funded by the new Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) law and extended the length of an existing 3,000-foot siding to 13,000 feet. Previously, this was the longest siding on the nearly 28-mile corridor between Monroe and Pinoca Yard in Charlotte. Extending the siding an additional 10,000 feet provides an almost two-mile siding on the SF-Line clear of road crossings for CSX to be able to pass long trains between Monroe and Charlotte. Dispatcher controlled power-switches were provided on both ends of the siding to allow efficient train movements.

The project started in 2016 with the Rail Division being responsible for developing the design plans and CSX providing plan reviews. AECOM was selected as the design firm. The Department and CSX entered into the project construction agreement in late 2018 and CSX advertised for bids in early 2019. Work began in May of 2019.

CSX managed the project construction with NCDOT oversight, and the grading work progressed on an aggressive schedule. Track construction progressed behind the grading work and the mainline turnouts were cut-in during the summer. The project was completed and put into service in December.



NCDOT currently has another project within the limits of Stouts Siding that will improve the operation even more. Project P-5744 will build a bridge to separate Wesley Chapel Stouts Road and railroad traffic, eliminating the only at-grade crossing remaining in the siding. When this project is complete it will extend the clear, crossing-free length of the siding to 13,000 feet, yielding further operational and safety benefits for trains and motorists.

Dixie Storage, Bladenboro and East Arcadia Sidings

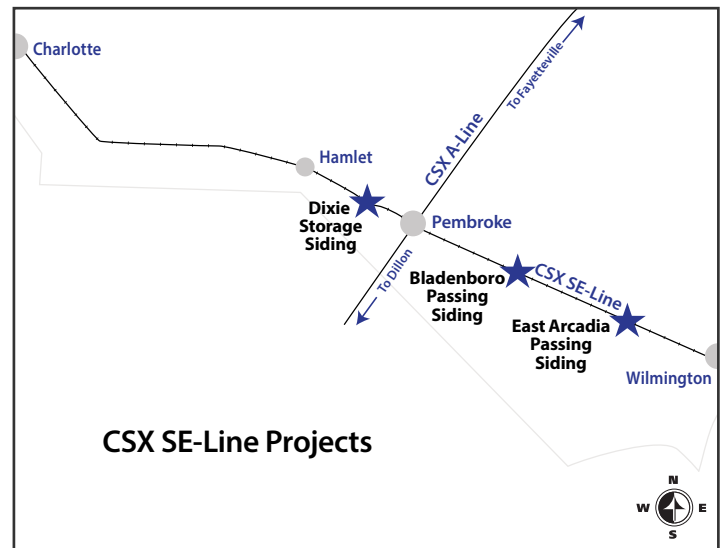


CSX also finished three projects funded by federal CMAQ funds. Project C-5600BA expanded CSX's Dixie Storage Siding in Maxton and upgraded both the Bladenboro Siding and East Arcadia Siding. All projects improved the efficiency of freight operations on the line by adding siding capacity, signaling and power switches. These improvements increase the speed at which trains can move off of the SF-Line onto siding tracks.

The expansion of Dixie Storage siding added approximately 4,000 feet to yard track 1 and almost 2,000 feet to yard track 2. This project is located in East Laurinburg at the junction with the Laurinburg & Southern Railroad (LRS). The interchange between CSX and LRS used to block the mainline (CSX's line between Wilmington and Hamlet) while trains were switching on the main because neither of the yard tracks were long enough to accommodate the moves. A new two-track, phase constructed bridge was also required to extend the yard track 1 across Leith Creek.

Engineering work began on the project in mid 2017 and final plans were completed in the fall of 2018. CSX, responsible for the construction of the project, bid the work out in June of 2018 and everything was finished in August 2019.

The siding improvements at Bladenboro and East Arcadia included new 25 mph turnouts with power switches, allowing operations to occur much more quickly than having to do it manually. The signal design for these two locations was done by Interrail for CSX.



NCDOT Passenger Service Reduced due to COVID-19

Amtrak, which operates North Carolina's passenger train service, has put in place stricter cleaning protocols both on trains and in stations. Customer facing employees including conductors and train attendants are wearing face masks, and passengers are now being asked to do the same. Capacity is being restricted on trains to ensure social distancing between passengers. Train services have also been temporarily reduced. Please check ncbytrain.org for current schedules and to book travel.

Amtrak is waiving change fees on all existing reservations until Aug. 31. Passengers can modify their trips on amtrak.com, or find their reservation on the home screen in the Amtrak app. To cancel a reservation with no fee, passengers must call 800-BY-TRAIN and speak with an agent (not available via Amtrak.com or the app).

Charlotte Gateway Station – Phase I Construction Update



The Charlotte Gateway Station Phase 1 project is targeted for completion in 2023. The scope includes bridges to support passenger tracks, a center island level-boarding platform, and railroad track and signals.

7th Street looking south toward the block that will be the primary station area for the City's mixed-use development.



Construction of platform footing between 5th and Trade Streets



Setting girders at 6th Street bridge



Pouring the deck on 5th Street bridge

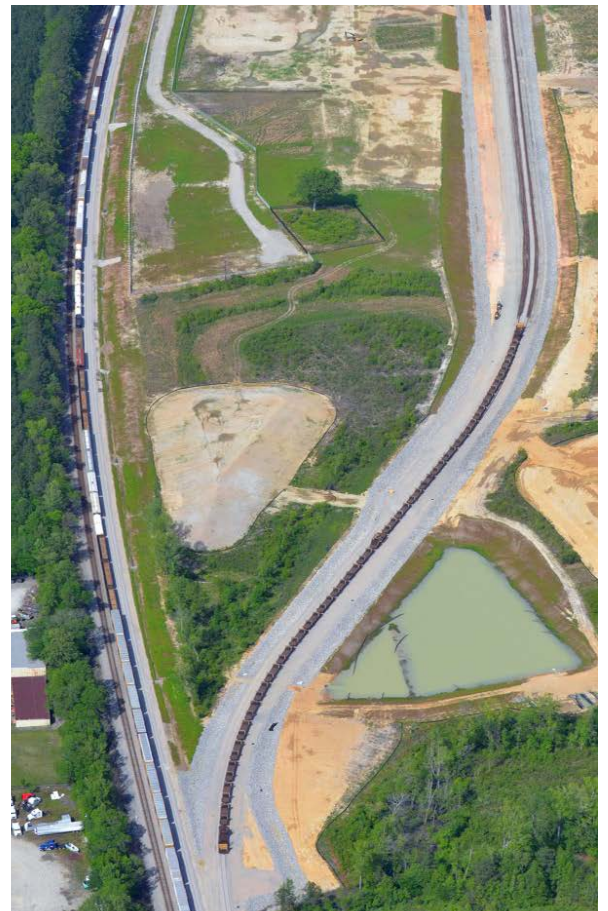


Aerial view of terminal site looking west

Construction continues on the Carolina Connector (CCX) intermodal terminal in Rocky Mount. Significant grading, utility and drainage operations are underway, while construction of the south lead track and buildings have begun.



Terminal North lead, looking north



Terminal South lead, looking north



Administration building construction, west wall



Maintenance building steel erected

NCDOT and the Coastal Carolina Railroad Improve Crossings

With the Freight Rail and Rail Crossing Safety Initiative, the Rail Division partners with railroads around the state to improve road surfaces at grade crossings for vehicles and trains. Both crossings for this month are located on the Carolina Coastal Railroad in Pitt County. Both crossings were upgraded in partnership between NCDOT Division 2 Pitt County Maintenance, the Rail Division and Carolina Coastal Railroad.

The crossing at Brick Kiln Road near Simpson was an asphalt and rail seal surface in poor condition, creating a rough crossing for motorists. It was replaced with asphalt and rubber rail seal, providing a much improved ride.

The second crossing on Fields Street in Farmville was asphalt only with no flangeway material. The asphalt was

breaking, creating a hole around a joint in the track. This was replaced with an asphalt and rubber rail seal crossing, while the joint in the track was also removed, helping reduce future problems. This improvement offers a much smoother crossing for traffic on this road.



Brick Kiln Road crossing before improvements

Fields Street crossing before improvements



Brick Kiln Road crossing after improvements

Fields Street after improvements

Ridership & Revenue on NC By Train Service – February 2020 vs. 2019						
	RIDERSHIP			REVENUE		
	2020	2019	% +/-	2020	2019	% +/-
Piedmont	16,795	15,075	11%	\$427,659	\$356,505	20%
Carolinian	14,976	15,814	-5%	\$969,926	\$1,008,047	-4%

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Hours Volunteered by N.C. Train Hosts in February supporting NC By Train on board and at events

February 2020 – Service modifications affected four *Piedmont* trains.